



TOWN OF BERWYN HEIGHTS

Prince George's County, Maryland

Incorporated in 1896 ~ Sixth Oldest Municipality in PG County

WORKSESSION MINUTES NOVEMBER 18, 2013

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. Present were Mayor Calvo, Mayor Pro Tem (MPT) Wilkinson, Councilmembers (CM) Almoguera, Dennison and Eddy. Also present were Town Administrator (TA) Murphy, Clerk Harper, C. P. Johnson representatives Gary Dyson and Robyn Barnhart; and the Green Community Garden volunteers Trinity Tomsic, Tim Lewis, Barbara Ceptus Schreiber, and Jeff and Laura Knutson.

1. MAYOR

Calendar: The Council reviewed the calendar. The date of the next Four Cities meeting in College Park was changed to January 30, 2014.

Minutes: On a motion by MPT Wilkinson and second by CM Kulpa-Eddy, the November 4 worksession minutes were approved 5 to 0.

Department reports: Mayor Calvo reported that he and MPT Wilkinson attended the Prince George's County Municipal Association (PGCMA) meeting featuring recently appointed CEO of Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) Kevin Maxwell. Dr. Maxwell was appointed to the position in June. At one time, he served the chair of the Berwyn Presbyterian Church Board of Trustees and knows this area well. Dr. Maxwell said that he is still taking stock of Prince George's public schools and does not have answers yet to many of the outstanding problems. He acknowledged that the Capital Improvement Planning (CIP) process is broken and needs to be straightened out before funds are requested in Annapolis. At the same meeting, the PGCMA adopted its legislative priorities, which are to engage in the process to make changes to the Prince George's County tax differential system and to support MML in seeking to restore Highway User Revenues.

MPT Wilkinson reported that he had the opportunity to talk with Dr. Maxwell about building a sidewalk through the Greenbelt bus depot driveway, which Berwyn Heights students must cross to reach Greenbelt Middle School. Dr. Maxwell was familiar with the intersection and the bus depot and promised to look into it. Then, MPT Wilkinson received an email saying that the CIP office has been instructed to move forward with the project and that he should hear from them by Thanksgiving. In Berwyn Heights, loose leaf collection season is in full swing. Public Works requests that residents refrain from parking close to leaf piles to allow leaf vacuum machines easy access to the piles.

CM Kulpa-Eddy reported that she attended a public hearing on Prince George's County 2035, the County's master plan for future development. The plan includes items that affect Berwyn Heights:

1) The Town is in a designated primary employment area, which qualifies for targeted marketing and investment to spur employment. This includes investment in broadband internet, bike lanes and sidewalks. However, a request should be made to include Berwyn Heights by name so that it receives future notices of hearing. Downtown Prince George's priority areas in the North County are Prince George's Plaza, New Carrollton and Largo Town Center.

CM Dennison reported that all recent community events were very well attended. The next event will be the Tree Lighting on December 7, 6 pm.

Citizen comments: Mayor Calvo received a complaint from a 58th Avenue resident about the distribution of hateful literature in Town. When following up with the Chief, he learned that the police had already talked to the individual and ushered him out of Town. He also received comments about a Park & Planning helicopter circling over Berwyn Heights late at night; about a burglary in progress that was stopped by the owners returning home. The owners were able to describe the suspect, who is known to Berwyn Heights police. Another comment was about a dumpster that had remained too long at a property.

CM Kulpa-Eddy received a comment about a dumpster overflowing with trash, which is used by the new Domino's Pizza next to Staples. CM Almoguera received a couple of comments on the loose leaf collection process and a suggestion to institute a leaf collection schedule so that residents know when to expect the leaf vacuum. MPT Wilkinson said that a set timetable is not practical for a town as small as Berwyn Heights. However, it takes only about 7 - 10 business days for the leaf vacuum machine to make its round.

Green Team community garden presentation: Mayor Calvo welcomed the members of the community garden planning committee of the Green Team. Green Team coordinator Trinity Tomsic gave an overview of the community garden project and what has been accomplished to date. The garden committee has 7 members, to whom, Tim Lewis and Barbara Schreiber, will speak later tonight. Ms. Tomsic said that the community garden is on track to open in April 2014, thanks to the work of the committee, and the support of TA Murphy and Public Works Acting Director Lockley. The focus to date has been to identify a site that meets requirements of adequate sunlight, water and space. After a series of site visits, the committee settled on the Tecumseh Street right-of-way between 58th and Avenue. Committee members also met with community garden managers in other cities and towns to gather information on garden design, resource needs, rule regulations, and best practices.

Ms. Tomsic stressed the committee knows that a community garden is a big undertaking, which requires careful planning to be successful. Therefore, experts were consulted to evaluate infrastructure and stormwater runoff challenges with the sloped site, as well as to advise on best layout, and to test soil quality. Lastly, the committee has started to reach out to the community to inform them of the community garden plans. So far, the feedback has been positive.

Tim Lewis discussed the cost estimates for the garden's capital needs. The overall cost is \$12,430, which breaks down as follows:

- \$4,250 for an 8' high vinyl-coated chain link fence with posts and 2 gates. A tall fence is needed to keep out the deer;
- \$3,000 for the installation of the fence. If Public Works can install it, the expense would go away;
- \$1,750 for pressure treated lumber to construct 25 raised beds at a unit cost of \$70 per bed. This could be done by the volunteers themselves;
- \$800 for a 1,200 gallon cistern to store water, which could be periodically filled by the fire department;
- \$680 for a 10'x10' wooden storage shed for garden tools and equipment;
- \$540 for a wooden picnic table with steel frame;
- \$300 for signs and bulletin board explaining the garden, and posting the regulations;
- \$600 for compost plus \$225 for delivery. The compost is needed now for tilling in spring;
- \$125 for hoses and watering cans.

Barbara Schreiber reported on the next steps to open the community garden in April 2014. Thanks to Public Works, the site has been cleared from brush and is ready for compost to be added, which will be tilled into the soil in spring. During the winter, the team will be doing more outreach and work on the rules and regulations for the garden. At this point, 35 residents have expressed interest in participating. The committee is also pursuing a \$5,000 grant and donations from businesses and the community to fund some of the tools and materials needed. Any funds raised would mean a reduction in money spent by the Town. Installation of the fence and construction of the first raised beds is planned for February and March 2014. The Boy Scouts have agreed to help with construction of the beds and compost bin as part of an Eagle Scout project. Plot rental will begin as soon as the garden is open, which will generate some revenue that can be invested in additional equipment.

In the question and answer period, MPT Wilkinson sought clarification about the site plan and asked whether there is a storm drain structure on, or under the proposed site. TA Murphy said that the site was checked by Miss Utility and no pipes or other utility structures were found, excepting a culvert at the 59th Avenue end of the site. MPT Wilkinson cautioned that Miss Utility occasionally has been wrong about their findings. He also asked if there will be a foot path along the north side of the proposed beds, and whether the cistern will be enclosed to prevent mosquito breeding. Mr. Lewis said there will be room for paths on both sides of the beds, and the cistern will be fully enclosed and opaque to prevent mosquitoes and algae growth.

CM Dennison said that no pesticides or other chemicals should be used in the garden. CM Kulpa-Eddy said that her main question has already been answered, with that neighbors are consulted about the project. It appears from the response that there is enough interest to rent the first set of plots.

CM Kulpa-Eddy also asked if there is enough parking in the vicinity. Mr. Lewis said that there is a fairly large parking area on a property across from the garden at 58th Avenue, plus some on-street parking. CM Almoguera said she knows from personal experience that it is important for the success of the garden to have easy access to water and tools.

Mayor Calvo commended the committee members on their thoughtful and deliberate planning. He suggested the Council authorize \$9,000 from surplus for common garden expenses to get it up and running. It seems likely that not all of this money will be used if donations and grant moneys come in. CM Dennison moved, and Almoguera seconded, to authorize up to \$9,000 from surplus for the expenditures identified in the presentation. The motion passed 5 to 0.

At 8:15 p.m., the Council took a 10 minute break.

Sidewalks 60% design and storm water offset project: Mayor Calvo welcomed C.P. Johnson engineers Gary Dyson and Robyn Barnhart. Mr. Dyson said that he made changes to the sidewalk engineering plans based on the Council's most recent comments.

- 8600 block of 57th Avenue: The sidewalks are bumped 5' into the roadway, except for the first 20 feet from the Berwyn Road intersection. This avoids a manhole that would be difficult to adjust. The storm water drains and swale for the rain garden in front of the Town office will be bridged with a walkable concrete.
- 8600 block of Cunningham Drive: the driveway for the corner property at Pontiac Street and Cunningham Drive has been relocated to the west front yard access from Pontiac Street. At the same corner the sidewalk swings around a utility pole onto the property and leaves a small area behind the curb that can be paved or seeded with grass.
- Pop's Park frontage: The sidewalk at the northern end of Pop's Park swings to the east to avoid a storm water inlet at the north entrance. Mayor Calvo said the Council had requested to straighten out the sidewalk, while keeping a green strip between curb and sidewalk. This change still needs to be made. It might be accomplished by angling the sidewalk slightly more to the east and/or placing a cover over the inlet. The sidewalk ramps onto Quebec Place should also be straightened up.
- 8800 block of 60th Avenue: The sidewalk was bumped out 2 feet into the roadway up to the first driveway of the corner property to avoid two mature maple trees. This will require a no-parking zone along that stretch of road.
- 6200 block of Pontiac Street: The ramp at the school driveway entrance has been pulled back to facilitate left turns into the driveway. Part of the ramp will be on school property for which permission from Prince George's County Schools (PGCPS) may be needed.

Robyn Barnhart explained the stormwater mitigation project required by Prince George's County to offset the increased runoff resulting from the new sidewalks. The sidewalks will add .36 acres or approximately 20,000 square feet of paved sidewalk surface, which the engineers propose to offset with a mitigation project in the Public Works yard. Since completion of the field topographical survey, it was learned that the best filtration option may be a so-called "jellyfish" system, which is a bio-retention pond. It is less of a height differential between intake and outlet than the Filterra and bio-retention pond discussed earlier. The system is flow-based and does not require storage of water. The structure has a grated top that intercepts the runoff and sends it under a baffle that forces sediment to settle. On the other side of the baffle, water rises through a set of filter cartridges that retains chemical pollutants, and exits through an outlet pipe.

Ms. Barnhart continued that the jellyfish filter would be installed in the swale next to the driveway and would capture the rainwater from the drain pipe that runs along the north side of the yard. To meet the County's offset requirement, additional areas are included by installing curbs along the yard driveway and by redirecting downspouts from the roofs. The entire project is estimated to cost \$64,000, including a 25% contingency.

Mayor Calvo said that it was his understanding that the County would not insist on an exact offset because the runoff from the Public Works yard is more polluted elsewhere in Town. If that is the case, then he would prefer not to have to spend additional money to get to a higher offset number. Ms. Barnhart said she does not know what Mr. Davila and the County agreed to but she can find out. CM Kulpa-Eddy asked if the sidewalks on the 8900 block of 63rd Avenue are part of the requirement. MPT Wilkinson said, to the best of his knowledge, they were not. CM Kulpa-Eddy said, regardless, the Town may be wise not to insist on getting a letter from Mayor Calvo said that he would like to at least ask if the mitigation project is acceptable without adding the roof and the driveway changes. This would save \$5,000 or 8% of the project cost. Ms. Barnhart said she would check on that. Mayor Calvo added that he will again talk with Adam Ortiz, Director of the Department of Environmental Resources, about the project. He had previously indicated that the project is acceptable without the add-ons of driveway and roofs.

TA Murphy said the next steps are obtaining a sediment control permit from the County, which can take up to 2 months, and possibly a building permit. At the same time the engineers will finalize the sidewalks design and produce bid specs, which will be used to put the project out to bid.

TA Murphy noted that C.P. Johnson has produced the preliminary designs for the sidewalks on the 8900 block of 63rd Avenue. He will meet with Berwyn Presbytery Church representatives this week to discuss them.

Greenbelt Station revised conceptual site plan: TA Murphy explained that the Town received a letter from Norman Rivera, General Counsel for the Greenbelt Station south core developers, which requests the District Council to permit a change in the conceptual site plan. The change requested is to reduce the commercial retail/office space [and eliminate the live/work units in the condo buildings]. He would like to know if the Council wants Mr. Rivera to make a presentation on the revised plans.

Mayor Calvo said that the changes requested by the developers would replace the requirement to build 80,000 square feet of retail/office space before residential building permits can be issued with a requirement to set aside .5 acres for potential retail development, which can convert to public parkland if retail is economically feasible. He commented that he does not like the change in plans. Every presentation about the south core development made to the Council started with retail along the connector road. He thinks this would be beneficial to Berwyn Heights and this area. He also thought that businesses would be viable if the north core was developed. However, he would not take a stand without knowing what Greenbelt's position is. TA Murphy was asked to find out.

CM Kulpa-Eddy pointed out that enclosed in the communication is a letter from Beltway Plaza representative Kap Kapastin supporting the change. She also noted that there is a proposed realignment of the stream valley trail. Mayor Calvo said it is probably a good idea to have Mr. Rivera come in to make a presentation on the changes. The Council agreed.

Nothing was discussed under **2. Public Safety** and **3. Public Works**.

4. ADMINISTRATION

Legislative dinner agenda: Mayor Calvo said that there is another worksession to talk about the agenda. But the format is fine.

Emergency generator update: TA Murphy said that he expects to receive the 95% design plan from Telegent Engineering tomorrow. If there are no changes, the plans will be finalized and bid specs can be drawn. However, he and engineer Timothy Smidt think the engineering and the site plans should be submitted to the Council for review prior to putting the project out to bid to avoid any surprises.

TA Murphy also provided answers to some of the questions the Council had about the project. He said that Mr. Smidt thinks a 30 kWh generator will be sufficient to operate the Town office, including furnace and air conditioning units. He recommends using two 60 kWh generators for the Town Center rather than one 120 kWh generator. That design interfaces better with the two existing electric panels, one each for upstairs and downstairs, and allows for separate operation of one floor or another. Further, installation of the generators behind the Town office keeps cost down because only one trench of a relatively short distance would need to be dug. The cost of the project is \$113,000 with the exception of Pepco's charge for shutting the electric system down and turning it back on.

Mayor Calvo said that he would like to have a better idea of Pepco's cost, and how the remaining \$45,000 of the emergency generator budget will be used. Wilkinson asked what the decibel level of the generators will be. TA Murphy said he thinks it is around 60 decibel per unit, which is why they are enclosed by baffles.

5. CODE COMPLIANCE

Code director/supervisor position description: TA Murphy said that he does not have a revised description ready for discussion, which incorporates the same as Mayor Calvo provided. Mayor Calvo said that his foundation uses hiring blueprints that are mostly posted online and drive traffic to the website. He also clarified that he was not expecting TA Murphy to create the blueprint but have the search firm the Town plans to hire do this.

Nothing was discussed under **6. Parks and Recreation.**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:50 p.m.

Signed: Kerstin Harper, Town Clerk

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